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JULY 31.

The President, Dr. RUSCHENBERGER, in the chair.

Seventeen members present.

Poisonous Properties of the Leguminosæ. — Dr. ROTHROCK remarked that hitherto we had by common consent regarded the plants of the order Leguminosæ as, on the whole, rather innocuous. During the past few years a number of its representatives have been attracting attention on account of their supposed agency in poisoning cattle and horses in our southwestern territories. It is true that none of these save the *Sophora*, to be mentioned last, have been subjected to a severe scientific test by physiological experiments; still the main facts alleged are doubtless to be depended upon.

The veteran botanist of the Pacific Coast, Dr. A. Kellogg, has a short article on the subject in the *Proceedings of the California Academy*, vol. vi. p. 3, which goes over most of the ground. It is then only to give an increased circulation to the facts that he alluded to them here.

In southern Colorado, especially about Fort Garland, the offending plant is *Oxytropis Lamberti*, a most variable species. At first, from some of the symptoms, it was supposed that it was due to something like *Aconitum*, but as the region was out of the range of any considerable quantity of *A. nasutum*, the only species likely to be found near, and as we had no definite observations on its action, attention was directed elsewhere, and the *Oxytropis* pretty clearly fixed as the plant. The effect of this appears to be long enduring; the animal becoming demented, and wasting away as his fondness for the poison increases to something like the opium habit in man. Dr. Kellogg contrasts this with the temporary effects (intoxication and stupefaction) of a southern species of *Tephrosia*. During Dr. Rothrock's stay at New Camp Grant, in Arizona, in 1874, it was alleged that *Hosackia Purshiana* was producing like effects on the horses.

In California Dr. Kellogg regards the noxious plant there as *Astragalus Menziesii*, Gray. And it is also asserted that *Astragalus Hornii*, Gray, and *Astragalus lentiginosus*, Dougl., are in the same list in California.

The general name for the disease in the animals is "Loco." Among the inhabitants of the southwest it simply refers to their becoming foolish. As yet we cannot say on what active principle the effects depend; neither do we know whether it is dissipated in drying. It would be well if exact experiments in this direction could be instituted. The boundary lines between a poison and a remedy are rather those of degree than of kind, and it is

not improbable that in these very plants our physicians may find a means of "counteracting some tendency to death."

Regarding *Sophora speciosa*, Benth., from Texas, our knowledge is now well grounded, thanks to Prof. H. C. Wood, Jr., M.D. He has succeeded in obtaining an alkaloid, which he names *Sophoria* from the bean. Its effects are not unlike those of Calabar bean. For a full account of this see *Philadelphia Medical Times*, August 4, 1877. The Indians of Texas use the bean to produce an intoxication which lasts from two to three days. Half a bean, it is said, will induce intoxication, and a whole one may lead to dangerous symptoms.

Julia A. H. Walker was elected a member.

AUGUST 7.

The President, Dr. RUSCHENBERGER, in the chair.

Sixteen members present.

AUGUST 14.

The President, Dr. RUSCHENBERGER, in the chair.

Sixteen members present.

A paper entitled "On Lagochila, a new genus of Catostomoid Fishes," by David S. Jordan and A. W. Brayton, was presented for publication.

The deaths of Dwight D. Willard and Timothy A. Conrad were announced.

Influence of Magnetism on Living Organisms.—A letter from Dr. JOHN VANSANT, dated New Orleans, December 14, 1876, was read, stating substantially that he had killed a spider by exposing it to the influence of a magnetic current.

The animal had its vitality destroyed by the magnetism emanating from a small steel magnet of the U shape, commonly sold in the shops. The legs of the magnet were about two and a half inches long by a half inch wide, and one-sixth of an inch thick, the distance between the poles being about one quarter of an inch.

He noticed a small spider actively running along the arm of his chair. He brushed it off carefully with his finger and it fell upon the carpet. It began to run but was somewhat impeded by the roughness of the carpet. Having removed the armature he slid the magnet along the carpet following after the spider until it was between the poles. The animal almost instantly stopped and in a